

## ABILENE REFLECTOR

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY  
STROTHER BROS.

### PANTRY SCHOOL.

I'm thinking of the school-house, Ned,  
Where, sitting side by side,  
We studied Webster's spelling-book,  
And laughed over Gilpin's riddle;  
And traded jack-knives now and then,  
When not engaged in play;  
And got our jinkies nicely warmed—  
How often I'll not say.

I'm thinking of the roadside green,  
Of every tree and nook—  
And how in sultry hours of noon  
We swam in Pantry Brook;  
And when upon the easement came  
The ruler's tattoo loud,  
How each of us in passing in  
Took off his hat and bowed.

I'm thinking of the benches rude,  
And desks, so broad and steep,  
On which we left our autographs,  
In letters wide and deep;  
And of my first new writing book,  
Without a stain or spot,  
So soon and so easily soiled,  
With many an off-hand blot.

I'm thinking of the "old slough," Ned,  
Whose waters dark and cool,  
So often lured our sunburnt feet,  
While on the grassy bank we stood;  
On whose warm rim the tadpoles lay,  
In spring time, many a score,  
While golden lilies richly bloomed  
In summer, near the shore.

I'm thinking of the forests hoar,  
Where firs and cedars grew,  
And three feet high in mosses damp  
While hunting for the crow;  
And of the pleasant meadows, where  
On many a sunny day,  
The red-winged blackbird sang in spring,  
His love song, "quonk-a-ree."

I'm thinking of the hour-glass, Ned,  
With sands so white and fine,  
On which our teacher's smiling gaze,  
As neared the hour to dine;  
But for my sins was wasting, Ned,  
For often then I'd say,  
While fondling them upon my knee:  
"Papa, you're growing gray!"

—Charles C. Green, Jr., Independent.

### MY UNCLE'S WILL.

"My dear Mr. Payne," said my deceased uncle's lawyer, with an emphatic wag of his forefinger, "I assure you there's no help for it. The language of the will is perfectly simple and explicit. Either you must do as your late uncle desired, or you must let the property go to the representative of his deceased wife's family."

"But surely, Blenkinsopp," I said, deprecatingly, "might get the Court of Chancery to set it aside, as being contrary to public policy, or something of that sort. I know you can get the Court of Chancery to affirm almost anything you ask them, especially if it's something a little abstruse and out of the common; it gratifies the Court's opinion of its own acumen. Now, clearly, it's contrary to public policy that a man should make his own nephew ridiculous by his last will and testament, isn't it?"

Mr. Blenkinsopp shook his head vigorously. "Bless my soul, Mr. Payne," he answered, helping himself, to a comprehensive pinch from his snuff-box (an odious habit, confined, I believe, at the present day to family solicitors), "I assure you, my dear sir, the thing's simply impossible. Here's your uncle, the late Anthony Aikin, Esquire, deceased, a person of sound mind and an adult male above the age of twenty-one years—to be quite accurate, at least, was, seventy-eight—makes his will, and duly attests the same in the presence of two witnesses; everything quite in order; not a single word or even a suggestion in any way, well, he gives, and bequeaths to his nephew, Theodore Payne, gentleman—that's you after a few unimportant legacies, the bulk of his real and personal estate provided only that you adopt the surname of Aikin, prefixed before and in addition to your own surname of Payne. But—and this is very important—if you don't choose to adopt and use the said surname of Aikin, in the manner hereinbefore recited, then and in that case, my dear sir—why, then and in that case, as clear as current jelly, the whole said residue of his real and personal estate is to go to the heir or heirs-at-law of the late Amelia Maria Susannah Aikin, wife of the said Anthony Aikin, Esquire, deceased. Nothing could be clearer, my dear sir, in any way, and there's really nothing on earth for you to do except to choose between the two alternatives so clearly set before you by your deceased uncle."

"But look here, you know, Blenkinsopp," I said, appealingly, "no fellow can really be expected to go and call himself Aikin-Payne, now can he?—positively no ridiculous. Mightn't I still, the Payne, before the Aikin, and call myself Payne-Aikin, eh? That wouldn't be quite so absurdly suggestive of a perpetual tooth-ache. But Aikin-Payne! Why, the comic papers would take it up immediately. Every footman in London would grin audibly when he announced me. I fancy I hear the fellows this morning attempting at seriousness, and shouting out, 'Mr. Haching-Pain, ha, ha, ha!' with a loud guffaw behind the lintel. It would be simply unendurable!"

"My dear sir," answered the unsympathetic Blenkinsopp (most unsympathetic profession, an attorney's really), "the law doesn't take into consideration the question of the probable conduct of footmen. It must be Aikin-Payne or nothing. I admit the colloquial does sound a little ridiculous, to be sure; but your uncle's will is perfectly unequivocal upon the subject—in fact, ahem! I drew it up myself, to say the truth; and unless you call yourself Aikin-Payne, in the manner hereinbefore recited, then and in that case, observe (there's no deception), then and in that case the heir or heirs-at-law of the late Amelia Maria Susannah Aikin, deceased, shall be entitled to benefit under the will as fully in every respect as if the property was bequeathed directly to him, her or them, by name, and to no other person."

"And who the dickens are these heirs-at-law, Blenkinsopp?" I ventured to ask, after a moment's pause, during which the lawyer had refreshed himself with another prodigious sniff from his snuff box.

"Who the dickens are they, Mr. Payne? I should say Mr. Aikin-Payne, ahem—why how the dickens should I know, sir? I don't suppose I keep a genealogical table and full pedigree of all the second cousins of all my clients hung up conspicuously in some spare corner of my brain, do you, eh? Upon my soul I really haven't the slightest notion. All I know about them is that the late Mrs. Amelia Maria Susannah Aikin, deceased, had one sister, who married somebody or other somewhere, against Mr. Anthony Aikin's wishes, and that he never had anything further to say to her at any time. But where she's gone and how she fares, nobody knows and nobody cares, sir, as the poet justly remarks."

I was not previously acquainted with the poet's striking observation on this matter, but I didn't stop to ask Mr.

Blenkinsopp in what author's work these stirring lines had originally appeared. I was too much occupied with other thoughts at that moment to pursue my investigations into their authorship and authenticity. "Upon my word, Blenkinsopp," I said, "I've really half a mind to shy the thing up and go on with my schoolmastering."

Mr. Blenkinsopp shrugged his shoulders. "Believe me, my dear young friend," he said, sententiously, "twelve hundred a year is not to sneeze at. Without inquiring too precisely into the exact terms of your existing finances, I should be inclined to say your present engagement can't be worth to you more than three hundred a year."

I nodded acquiescence. "The exact figure," I murmured, "is—"

"And your private means are?"

"Non-existent," I answered, frankly.

"Then, my dear sir, excuse such plainness of speech in a man of my profession; but if you throw it up you will be a perfect fool, sir; a perfect fool, I assure you."

"But perhaps, Blenkinsopp, the next-of-kin won't step in to claim it?"

"Doesn't matter a bit, my dear fellow. Executors are bound to satisfy themselves before paying you over your legacy that you have assumed and will use the name of Aikin before and in addition to your own name of Payne, in the manner hereinbefore recited. There's no getting over that in any way."

I sighed aloud. "Twelve hundred a year is certainly very comfortable," I said. "But it's a confounded bore that one should have a condition tacked on to it which will make one a laughing-stock for life to all the buffoons and idiots of one's acquaintance."

Blenkinsopp nodded in modified assent. "After all," he answered, "I wouldn't mind taking it on the same terms myself."

"Well," I said, "che sera sera. If it must be, I must be; and you may put an advertisement in the *Times* accordingly. Tell the executors that I accept the condition."

"I won't stop in town," said I to myself, "to be chaffed by all the fellows at the club and in the master's room at St. Martin's. I'll run over on the Continent after the will (confound them) have it all published in 'The Standard' man, and if there's anything on earth I hate it's cheap and easy joking and punning on a name or a personal peculiarity which lays itself open obviously to stupid buffoonery. Of course I shall chuck up the schoolmastering now—it's an odious trade at any time—and I may as well take a pleasant holiday while I'm about it. Let me see—Sicily or Cannes or Florence would be the best thing at this time of year. Escape the November fogs and January frosts. Let's make it Cannes, then, and try the first effect of my new name upon the *corpus vile* of the Canois."

So I packed up my portmanteau hurriedly, took the 7-45 to Paris, and that same evening found myself comfortably ensconced in a *chambre*, making my way as fast as the Lyons line would carry me, en route for the blue Mediterranean. The Hotel du Paradis at Cannes is a very pleasant and well managed place, where I succeeded in making myself perfectly at home. I gave my full name to the *concierge* boldly.

"Thank Heaven," I thought, "Aikin Payne is a sound name just as good a label to one's back as Howard or Cholmondeley. She won't lose the absurdity of the combination." She was a fat, blonde Swiss by origin, and she took it without moving a muscle. But she answered me in a very tolerable English,—"me, who thought my Parisian accent unimpeachable." Very well, sir, your letters shall be sent to me. I saw there was the faintest twinkle of a smile about the corner of her mouth, and I felt that even she, a mere foreigner, a Swiss *concierge*, perceived at once the incongruity of the two surnames.

However, I changed my tourist suit for a black cutaway and made my way down to the *salle-a-manger*. The dinner was good in itself and was enlivened by the presence of a most extremely pretty girl, say nineteen, whom I sat just opposite, and whose natural protector I soon managed to draw casually into a general conversation. I say her natural protector, because though I took him at the time for her father, I discovered afterwards that he was really her uncle. Experience has taught me that when you sit at a pretty girl at an hotel, you ought not to open fire by directing your observations to herself in person; you should begin diplomatically by gaining the confidence of her male relations through the wisdom or the orthodoxy of your political and social opinions. Mr. Shackelford—that I found afterwards was the uncle's name—had been a member of the House of Commons, and I have the personal misfortune to be an equally rabid Radical; but on this occasion I successfully dissembled, acquiescing with vague generality in his denunciation of my dearest private convictions; and by the end of dinner we had struck up quite an acquaintance with one another.

"My dear sir," answered the unsympathetic Blenkinsopp (most unsympathetic profession, an attorney's really), "the law doesn't take into consideration the question of the probable conduct of footmen. It must be Aikin-Payne or nothing. I admit the colloquial does sound a little ridiculous, to be sure; but your uncle's will is perfectly unequivocal upon the subject—in fact, ahem! I drew it up myself, to say the truth; and unless you call yourself Aikin-Payne, in the manner hereinbefore recited, then and in that case, observe (there's no deception), then and in that case the heir or heirs-at-law of the late Amelia Maria Susannah Aikin, deceased, shall be entitled to benefit under the will as fully in every respect as if the property was bequeathed directly to him, her or them, by name, and to no other person."

"And who the dickens are these heirs-at-law, Blenkinsopp?" I ventured to ask, after a moment's pause, during which the lawyer had refreshed himself with another prodigious sniff from his snuff box.

"Who the dickens are they, Mr. Payne? I should say Mr. Aikin-Payne, ahem—why how the dickens should I know, sir? I don't suppose I keep a genealogical table and full pedigree of all the second cousins of all my clients hung up conspicuously in some spare corner of my brain, do you, eh? Upon my soul I really haven't the slightest notion. All I know about them is that the late Mrs. Amelia Maria Susannah Aikin, deceased, had one sister, who married somebody or other somewhere, against Mr. Anthony Aikin's wishes, and that he never had anything further to say to her at any time. But where she's gone and how she fares, nobody knows and nobody cares, sir, as the poet justly remarks."

I was not previously acquainted with the poet's striking observation on this matter, but I didn't stop to ask Mr.

Ruby Estcourt—she gave me her name before long—was quite as pleasant to talk to as she was beautiful and graceful. Her behavior, unfortunately, her aunt was not one of the race of talkative old ladies, and she left the mass of the conversation entirely to Ruby and myself.

It was all so fresh and delightful to me—the palms, the Mediterranean, the balmy evening air, the gleaming white town, and pretty Ruby Estcourt—that I walked up and down the terrace as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

"I colored a little—happily invisible by moonlight—as I answered: 'That was an omission on my part, certainly. When you told me you were Miss Estcourt, I ought to have mentioned in return that my own name was Aikin-Payne, Theodore Aikin-Payne, if you please. I give you a cordial welcome, as long as they would let me; and I was really sorry when good Mrs. Shackelford at last suggested that it was surely getting time for uncle's game of cribbage. As they turned to go, Ruby said good evening, and then, hesitating for a moment as to my name, said quite simply and naturally, "Why, you haven't yet told us who you are, have you?"

and kiss Ruby just once, by way of earnest. Ruby took the kiss calmly and sedately; so then I knew the matter was practically settled. Unfortunately, however, "But there's one thing, Mr. Payne, I must really insist upon," Ruby said, very quietly; "and that is that I mustn't be called Mrs. Aikin-Payne. If I marry you at all, I must marry you as plain Mr. Payne without any Aikin. So that's clearly understood between us."

Here was a terrible condition, indeed! I reasoned with Ruby, I explained to Ruby, I told Ruby that if she positively insisted upon it, I must go back to my three hundred a year, and my paltry schoolmastering, and must give up my uncle Aikin's money. Ruby would hear of no refusal.

"You have always the alternative of marrying somebody else, you know," she said, with her most provoking and bewitching smile, "but if you really do want to marry me, you know the conditions."

"But, Ruby, you would never care to live upon a miserable pittance of three hundred a year. I hate the name as much as you do, but I think I should try to bear it for the sake of twelve hundred a year and perfect comfort."

No, Ruby was inexorable. "Take me or leave me," she said with provoking calmness, "but if you take me, give up your uncle's ridiculous suggestion. You can have three days to make your mind up. Till then, let us hear no more about the subject."

During those three days I kept up a brisk fire of telegrams with old Blenkinsopp in Chancery Lane; and at the end of them I came mournfully to the conclusion that I must either give up Ruby or take the name of Aikin-Payne. If I had been the hero of a romance I should have had no difficulty at all in deciding the matter; I should have nobly refused the money off-hand, counting it as mere dross compared with the loving heart of a beautiful maiden. But unfortunately I am not a hero of a romance; I am only an ordinary graduate of an English University. Under these circumstances, it did seem to me very hard that I must throw away twelve hundred a year for a mere sentimental fancy. And yet on the other hand, not only did I hate the name myself, but I couldn't bear to impose it on Ruby; and as to telling Ruby that I wouldn't have her, because I preferred the money, that was clearly quite out of the question. I looked at the thing in the face, the more certain it appeared that I must relinquish my dream of wealth and go back (with Ruby) to my schoolmastering and my paltry three hundred. After all, lots of other fellows marry on that sum; and to say the truth, I positively shrank myself from going through life under the ridiculous guise of an Aikin-Payne.

The upshot of it all was that at the end of the three days, I took Ruby a little walk alone among the olive gardens behind the shrubbery. "Ruby," I said to her haltingly, "you're the most fantastic, self-willed, imperious little person I ever met with, and I want to make just one more appeal to you. Won't you reconsider your decision and take me in spite of the surname?"

Ruby grubbed up a little weed with the point of her parasol, and looked away from me steadfastly as she answered with her immovable and annoying calmness: "No, Mr. Payne, I really can't reconsider the matter in any way. It was in the country, but we can teach you several things that may come useful in future years, and we guarantee to prove that horse sense and square dealing are certain to pay a semi-annual dividend.—*Real Free Press.*"

A Real Santa Claus.

As long as Mr. Samuel M. Cortright was a resident of Mauch Chunk he had been the heart of every poor child in that town by presenting it every Christmas with gifts in some shape or other, and for years his mode of observing Christmas was the feature of the day. Now that Mr. Cortright is a citizen of Allentown, he dispenses his favors to the children of his city, and he has been doing so for many years. He has been added to his fame as the children's friend. On Monday he announced that at two o'clock on Tuesday he would distribute 4,000 presents to 4,000 poor children and invited them to call around at that hour. Long before the appointed time the children were on hand, as well as grown-up persons, who came with the expectation of seeing fun, and they were not disappointed. To lend to the interest of the occasion Mr. Cortright engaged the Allentown Band, and the music attracted others who would otherwise have graced the occasion. At two o'clock the fun began. Instead of 4,000 poor children being on hand there were about 10,000, and the children were in the first number. It is strongly hinted that many of those who did assemble were not very poor, but with characteristic liberality Mr. Cortright did not draw the line between the poor and those better off. The snow, which fell thick and fast, did not appear to dampen the ardor of the boys, though some of the younger ones were nearly smothered under a first of the children passed by the windows two by two and received their presents, but soon this system was broken up, and then the presents were pitched out the windows. This caused a great deal of scrambling and afforded the four hundred spectators any amount of fun. The gifts consisted of portfolios, slates, scrap books, dolls of all sizes and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as a rule, all fared well, and in their estimation Mr. Cortright is the prince of good fellows.—*Allentown (Pa.) Chronicle.*

The United States boasts the only poisonous lizard, the Heloderma, a specimen of which was recently exhibited at the Central Park Zoo. Experimented at six times and nationalities, new garters, savings banks, tops, balls, whips, popguns, tin horns, express wagons and toys of all kinds and descriptions. The fun was kept up for about two hours. Some of the more successful grabbers succeeded in getting eight or ten toys. The children, as